

U.S. Rep. Grothman: Seeks help for the less fortunate

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(Washington, D.C.) – Congressman Glenn Grothman (R-Glenbeulah) today questioned The Honorable Margaret Weichert, Deputy Director for Management of the U.S. Office of Management and Budget (OMB), on ways the government can make programs such as the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), Women, Infants and Children (WIC) and Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) more efficient.

Ms. Weichert contended that too large a portion of the funds allotted to these programs go to bureaucrats and general overhead for the program. Weichert followed up on this statement by saying that the government could easily cut down on redundancies within these programs in order to provide more assistance to the individuals and families in need.

Excerpts of Grothman's questioning

Congressman Grothman: “Thank you for your proposals, I mean I think it’s a good thing to try to look what we can do to make the government more efficient and I think that when too many different agencies have things, you now one hand not knowing what the other is doing, you result in spending too much money and having perverse effects. One of the things you want to do is you want to combine the nutrition assistance program with other welfare programs. Could you explain the benefits of that?”

Hon. Weichert: *“So, I think that the primary issue actually looks at the delivery and the service component. So, states administer both the temporary assistance for*

needy families as well as the SNAP and the WIC programs essentially to largely the same group of people and they tend to have one organization that does that administration but when they deal with the federal government they have to deal with confusing, overlapping, sometimes conflicting requirements that add to their overhead and basically reduce the amount of money of the whole pool that actually goes to the needy families.”

Congressman Grothman: “That’s good. You know, one of the things I’m interested in is and one of the reasons I ran for this job is that you add up the public benefits all the different things, the tax benefit, the SNAP, the low income housing, the TANF, you wind up with really big numbers that discourage people from working and discourage people from getting married as well. Do you think that by trying to put everything under one roof we do a better job of seeing, quite frankly, how much is available out there if you don’t try to work as hard as you can?”

Weichert: *“So, I think the key thing from this proposal was really, and taking a great view of some of the best in serving communities that are at risk, when you look at how charities are judged and measured, they are measured by how much of the actual benefit goes directly to the cause and then the charities that have the best performance have the least amount of overhead. That’s really where I think we should be judged.”*

Congressman Grothman: “You feel we are spending a lot of money on poverty and a lot of that money is going to government employees who are administering the programs?”

Weichert: *“I absolutely think that we have excessive administrative overhead that would be better served actually bringing that money to the people that are targeted for it.”*

Congressman Grothman: “Do you feel we would be better off just taking a block amount of money and giving it to the states and saying ‘Here, you deal with the low income housing, you deal with nutrition, you deal with the educational requirements and we’re out of here altogether’ because when you look at the overall amount of money spent per person in poverty it’s just shockingly high, the average person would be happy to live off of that. Now of course a lot of that is not trickling down to the people in poverty, it’s going to the bureaucracy, but could you see the day come where the administration would say ‘Here is X amount of dollars per person in poverty in your state today. You deal with it.’?”

Weichert: *“So, I haven’t done the full analysis to be able to get to that conclusion. What I would say is that would be part of the dialogue that I think we should have, certainly there are governors and state and local authorities who would welcome that and I think as any members of this body have indicated, when we get to the implementation phase we have to look at the cost and benefits but, I think it’s certainly something we’d want to look at.”*

Click [here](#) to view Grothman’s full remarks (beginning at 1:24:51).